

Suggestions for Hosting a Welcome Quilt Square-Making Event with Lili's Quilt ©

Time involved: approximately 60 – 90 minutes for all activities

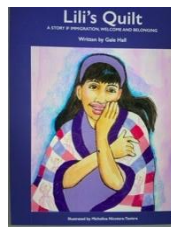
(Chose which activities you'd like to do based on your time frame.)

When to do this: after church, at a community event, at your school, at a conference, etc.

Who to invite: This event can be done with families and friends of mixed age groups together, or with age-specific groups. Let people know that this is an empathy-based event that explores the topic of migration with dignity.

A word about the children's book: Many picture books written for children also resonate with older kids and adults. Assure teens and adults that you are not “reading down” to them. Instead, you are offering a visually engaging option to explore a challenging topic in a familiar, safe way.

Review the book and the curriculum beforehand as you best know the groups you are inviting and can adapt the ideas suggested here as you see fit to meet their individual needs. Depending on the size of your group and the time you have, make a choice to do either the Welcome Quilt Squares activity or the Brainstorming Welcome Ideas Activity.



Gathering and Preparing Your Materials:

- Lili's Quilt: A Story of Immigration, Welcome, and Belonging - written by Gale Hall, illustrated by Michelina Nicotera-Taxiera; available on Amazon (January 2025)
- Backpack (or a paper bag if you don't have a backpack), scraps of paper, pencils
- Welcome Squares (prewashed cotton twill fabric cut into 8" x 8" squares)
- Fabric markers
- Easel paper (or other large paper) and regular markers
- Permissions Slips for making Welcome Squares (included in this document)

SETTING THE STAGE for LILI'S QUILT

Before reading the book, ask people what they like about where they live.

Then say - “As we read Lili's Quilt today, pay attention to what she likes about where she lives. Are some of those things the same as what you like?

Let's find out why Lili and her mom had to leave the home they loved in Honduras and how the gift of a quilt renewed Lili's hope." (When you finish the book, ask the group why Lili and her mom had to leave.)



BACKPACK ACTIVITY

- 1) Backpack Activity – Get the backpack or bag. Say – “Imagine you had to leave what you love like Lili did. What would you take with you that fits into this backpack that you will carry? Write/draw 3 ideas on a piece of paper.” Give a few minutes for this.
- 2) “Come up before the group and share one item on your paper and why you would bring that.” See if the group has any questions or comments. Then put the paper in the backpack. The next person shares something on their list that is different from what was already described. Continue until there are no more new ideas or you decide to move on.
- 3) “Imagine that you have reached the border. What it would be like if all these things in the backpack were lost or taken away? So now what? Your carefully chosen items are gone. How do you feel? What will you do?”
- 4) “The next part of your immigration journey will soon begin – becoming part of your new community.”

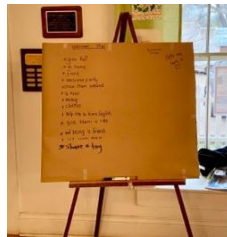


MAKING WELCOME SQUARE MESSAGES

- 1) “What kinds of messages or pictures would make you feel welcome if you were new in your town? Let's draw/write your welcome message/picture onto a fabric square with the fabric markers.” (Put a piece of paper under the fabric in case the markers bleed through. Leave a ¼” clear space around the border of the square where the quilter will sew.)
- 2) Talk about why these messages are so important – our words are powerful and have the tremendous power to hurt or heal. We get to choose our words.
- 3) If time, sit in a circle and show your squares describing what you drew or wrote and why.
- 4) If there is a quilter in your group, that person can contact the Welcome Quilt Project at welcomequiltproject@gmail.com to request the Toolkit that contains the instructions for

making a Welcome Quilt. When it is finished, your group can decide where in your community to hang the quilt and then use the ideas in the Toolkit or on the website (thewelcomequiltproject.org) to engage people in activities exploring the topic of immigration and welcoming. (If you don't have a quilter, you can send the squares to the Welcome Quilt Project which will use them to make quilts for exhibits that travel the country.)

- 5) Have participants sign the permission slip to use their Welcome Square in a quilt to be hung in a public place. (Permission slip and instruction attached. Send original to Gale Hall at PO Box 8267, Tucson, AZ 85738, or by email at welcomequiltproject@gmail.com, and keep copies for yourself.)



BRAINSTORMING WELCOME IDEAS

Say: “If a child or family had left their home to start again in our town, what could we do to welcome them? Let’s think of everything we can and write down the ideas on the paper.” (If they need prompting, ask what the new family would need to know - or need to have to begin again in a new country.)

DECIDING ON SOMETHING TO DO

“Let’s look at our ideas. Is there something there that we can begin to do now – individually or as a group? What do we need to do to make this idea happen?” Begin to decide on your next steps. (If you want, your group could vote on their favorite idea by asking each person to put a star or sticker next to the idea they would most like to do.)

Be sure to guide your group to engage in safe, age-appropriate activities.

Note to facilitator from the author about the Backpack activity: As you facilitate the conversation, you might find yourself needing to help the group to problem solve about what they want to bring. For example, often children will say that they want to bring a pet with them. Most of the time, the other children will immediately ask questions of their friends. If they don't, you can. Here are some comments that have been made by children with whom I have done this activity.

- “Will your pet fit in the backpack?”
- “The pet won’t be able to breathe when you zip up the pack.” (This statement led to a conversation that included unzipping the pack so the pet could breathe – followed by a concern that the pet might then jump out and run away – followed by a suggestion to cut a breathing hole in the front of the pack so the pet could breathe and still stay zipped up in the pack, etc.)
- “What will you do about food and water for your pet?”
- “What if it runs away and gets lost?”
- This often ends with considering that it might be kinder to the pet to leave it with neighbors instead of bringing it on the trip. This is a difficult conclusion to make.

This activity will be emotional for some participants. Sometimes people want to bring something that belonged to someone they love who has died. Be prepared for tears. You can respond with something like: "We all have special people in our lives. It is hard if they can't be with us, isn't it? That's why memories are so important." You can also acknowledge positive ways that you see your group supporting each other through these discussions. I have done this activity with all ages. It is interesting to see what people choose to take based on their ages and their responsibilities in life. Some things are common among all age groups. Others are very particular to an age group. You'll learn something new with each age group you engage.

I would love to hear your feedback about carrying out these ideas. You can reach me at welcomequiltproject@gmail.com. Thanks. Gale Hall

THE WELCOME QUILT PROJECT – Adult Permission – Voices from the Border and Gale Hall

I am happy to create a Welcome Quilt Square today that will become part of a Welcome Quilt to be displayed in a community to welcome people who are refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants to the United States. I understand that my drawing and whatever personal information I choose to add (name, age, or state, etc.) will be displayed in public and may even draw publicity.

_____	_____
Name	Location

_____	_____
Signature	Date

THE WELCOME QUILT PROJECT – Child Permission - Voices from the Border and Gale Hall

I am allowing my child to create a Welcome Quilt square today that will become part of a Welcome Quilt which will be displayed in a community to welcome people who are refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants to the United States. I understand that my child's drawing and whatever personal information he/she chooses to add (name, age, or state, etc.) will be displayed in public and may even draw publicity. [NOTE: We recommend using only your child's age and a nickname.]

I understand that the information included on this permission slip will not be made public. Only what my child chooses to put on the quilt square he/she creates will be publicly seen.

_____	_____
Child's Name	Location

Parent's name and Signature

Date

Child's "signature"